

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE OF CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Imelda Barajas, I am a mother and I live in Hartford CT with my family. I am undocumented. I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS because it would be an important step forward in getting health care access for our whole immigrant community.

In 2006 I had a very traumatic experience in the emergency room at Hartford Hospital. I arrived with a very strong stomach ache, it made me freeze up from the pain. My husband tried to comfort me and hug me but the pain was just too much.

When I arrived they sent me to the front desk to give my information. There was no interpretation, I had to use gestures to tell them my name and that I was experiencing deep stomach pain. They never moved me to a room to take my vitals, or to ask me what level of pain I was feeling.

Because I didn't have health insurance, they sent me to the waiting room. I thought that seeing how much pain I was in they would see me, but no. Other people arrived who had insurance and they were seen by doctors right away. I was still waiting. I thought I was going to die waiting.

I don't know how long I waited but it was until the morning, starting at 11pm. I fell asleep from the pain. When I woke up they still wouldn't see me so I went home, I couldn't wait any longer. They didn't do anything. Because I didn't have insurance they didn't see me. We went to Walgreens and got some pills for the pain.

Members of the committee, we ask you to support S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. It would be a big relief to have access to health insurance. At least have access to a doctor that could see us in case of emergency. It's not just me, it's many of us. We are afraid of getting sick because we don't have health insurance.

Thank you for your time,
Imelda Barajas